

What's in this book

Stories: learn more about these remarkable female composers through the stories of their lives and quotes from them (or about them) that really brings things to life. Suggestions of other music to try are also given, as are personal observations from Karen Marshall.

Piece features: details of the pedagogical value of the piece: technically, stylistically and theoretically.

Activities: additional musicianship tasks to complete.

Practice generator boxes: practice activities within a 'generator' box (see page 7), with suggested tasks and the opportunity for students and teachers to add in their own ideas.

Theory drills: Marguerite Balutet, one of the composers, wrote a book called *Theory of Music in 30 Lessons* and lots of the composers in this book practised their theory daily. In the spirit of this, I've provided some theory activities at the back of the book (see page 116).

The instrumental parts for *Divertimento* by Anna Amalia von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel can be downloaded from the *HerStory* page on fabermusic.com/shop and the audio can be downloaded from fabermusic.com/audio. There is also audio for both piano duet parts.

Effective piano practice and the practice generator

Too many budding pianists struggle to practise effectively. Starting at the beginning of a piece each time can result in a polished opening that deteriorates as the piece progresses. Having some tools to avoid this will encourage progress and help with motivation.

The **practice generator** is a useful resource to suggest structured activities that result in learning and understanding a piece in its entirety. These appear on occasion throughout the book. Each time a couple of tasks are provided, along with blank practice task boxes so that players can fill in their own ideas, also fostering independence in the learning process.

A generic **practice generator** is provided opposite, to be copied and used with any piece in this book – or with any new music.

Valse

Maria Szymanowska (1789–1831)

Piece features

Technical: phrasing, interpretation, dexterity.

Style: early romantic. **Theory:** keyboard harmony, accompaniment writing.

Activity: write in the keys that this piece passes through. It starts in A major.

Tempo di valse

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is A major (three sharps: F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Tempo di valse'. The dynamics are mezzo-piano (*mp*), forte (*f*), and mezzo-forte (*mf*). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, triplets, trills, and fingerings (1, 2, 3, 5).

Measures 1-5: *mp*, 3/4 time, A major. Features a melody in the right hand and a piano accompaniment in the left hand. Measure 5 ends with a triplet of eighth notes.

Measures 6-11: Measure 6 starts with a trill. Measures 7-8 feature triplets and fingerings (1, 2, 3, 1). Measure 9 includes a trill (tr) and a triplet. Measure 10 is marked *f*. Measures 11-12 feature a piano accompaniment with a melody in the right hand.

Measures 12-17: Measure 12 starts with a triplet. Measures 13-14 feature triplets and fingerings (1, 2). Measure 15 is marked *mf*. Measures 16-17 feature triplets and fingerings (3, 3, 3).

Measures 18-19: Measure 18 features triplets and fingerings (3, 3). Measure 19 features triplets and fingerings (5, 3, 3).



“To feel small in relation to what one wants to be, and to feel too great in relation to what one has achieved, to be torn between these two alternatives, without finding a solution, without finding the means to put an end to this state of struggle, to see always the task unfinished, to feel the soul burn with a fire that consumes it and to find it always unquenched, and to realize the human inability to abate this inner glow, this simmering volcano...”

Marie Jaëll, letter

My observations

I must confess to being very drawn to Marie Jaëll, especially after learning of her vast commitment to composing and music. It is perhaps no coincidence that the only duet in this book is written by a woman who had extensive experience performing them. This attractive waltz includes beautiful melodies teamed with harmonic surprise. It's great fun to play and very accessible. Her more advanced duets are amazing – do have a look at them (one is suggested on page 104). I'm excited to explore more of her music and pedagogy, in particular her piano method – I'm sure there's much I can learn from her.



Audio is available to download of both parts of this duet so you can play along. Scan the QR code or go to fabermusic.com/audio.

Piece features

Technical: balance of ensemble.

Style: romantic.

Theory: melodic writing, keyboard harmony.

Activity: list some key principles when playing duets.

Here are a few:

- 1) Decide who is going to lead at the beginning and mark in tempo changes.
- 2) If a duet stool isn't available, use two stools, angled or turned sideways to save space.
- 3) Decide who is going to play the pedal.